

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 EUR-25 SCA-01 SCS-03 AID-20 OMB-01

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AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ICRC LICROSS, VS, LA, CA

SUBJECT: RED CROSS INDOCHINA OPERATIONS GROUP (IOG)

SUMMARY: MISOFF REVIEWED WITH OPERATING CHIEF OF IOG GILL  
CURRENT STATUS OF OPERATIONS AND OUTLOOK FOR FUTURE. IOG  
EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL PROBLEMS AND IS REORGANIZING APRIL 1,  
WITH DIRECTOR STROH LEAVING MARCH 31 FOR RETURN TO SWEDISH RED  
CROSS. RESPONSIBILITIES IN VIETNAM AND LAOS FLOWING BACK TO  
PARENT ICRC OR LICROSS ORGANIZATIONS BUT UNCHANGED IN  
CAMBODIA. END SUMMARY.

1. FINANCES. IOG FACING SEVERE LIQUIDITY PROBLEMS AT END MARCH  
1974 AS WELL AS LONGER TERM BUDGETARY PROBLEMS STEMMING  
FROM INCREASED COSTS AND DRYING UP OF CONTRIBUTIONS. AS OF  
MARCH 31, IOG WILL HAVE TO PAY NUMBER OF LARGE BILLS FOR TRANSPORT,  
CLOTHING AND MEDICINE WHICH WILL REQUIRE ALL AVAILABLE CASH  
EXCEPT SWISS FRANCS 4,000,000. NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES  
NO LONGER PROVIDING FREE MEDICAL TEAMS SO IOG MUST RECRUIT  
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AND PAY ALL EXPENSES OF FRENCH-SPEAKING TEAMS.

2. BY MARCH 31, IOG WILL HAVE SPENT 77 PERCENT OF ITS PRIORITY BUDGET PLAN WHILE HAVING RECEIVED ONLY 67 PERCENT AND OBVIOUSLY CANNOT UNDERTAKE ANY NEW PROJECTS UNTIL ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED OR PLEDGED. IOG HOPEFUL OF RECEIVING CONTRIBUTIONS OF SWISS FRANCS 6,000,000 FROM JAPAN IN APRIL BUT THAT WOULD LEAVE IT STILL SF 19,000,000 BELOW PRIORITY BUDGET PLAN IN VIEW OF INFLATION SINCE PLAN ORIGINALLY DRAWN UP.

3. IN ORDER MEET EXPENSES AND CONTINUE OPERATIONS, IOG BEGINNING CUT BACK ON EXPENDITURES IN ALL COUNTRIES EXCEPT CAMBODIA WHICH, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, HAS HIGHEST PRIORITY. IOG EXPECTS REQUEST SOON PAYMENT BY USG OF \$1,500,000 BALANCE UNDER CURRENT AGREEMENT. GILL INQUIRED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF ADDITIONAL U.S. CONTRIBUTION AND WAS TOLD MISSION UNABLE ASSESS CHANCES BUT WOULD INQUIRE. PLEASE ADVISE.

4. ASSISTANCE IN SOUTH VIETNAM. IN ORDER MEET EXIGENCIES OF BUDGET, IOG WILL SCALE RELIEF ASSISTANCE IN SOUTH VIETNAM DOWN FROM \$150,000 TO \$75,000 MONTHLY. IOG DELEGATES WILL BE REDUCED FROM ONE IN EACH OF FOUR MILITARY REGIONS TO ONE ROVING DELEGATE BASED IN SAIGON TO VISIT ALL REGIONS PERIODICALLY.

5. MAJOR IOG PROJECT IN PRG AREA IS HOSPITAL, FOR WHICH IOG HAS ALREADY OBLIGATED SWISS FRANCS 5,500,000 OUT OF SF 8,000,000 ESTIMATED TOTAL COST. HOSPITAL NOT STARTED YET, BUT FIRST CONSIGNMENT OF MATERIAL EXPECTED ARRIVE HAIPHONG THIS MONTH. HOSPITAL WILL BE ASSEMBLED IN INDIVIDUAL SEMI-INDEPENDENT UNITS AS FUNDS AND MATERIAL BECOME AVAILABLE AND NOT EXPECTED BE COMPLETED BEFORE SUMMER 1975, IF THEN. IOG RELYING ON CONTRIBUTIONS FROM COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AND HAS HAD VERY GOOD RESPONSE FROM POLES, GOOD FROM EAST GERMANS, AND POOR FROM SOVIETS.

6. ASSISTANCE IN NORTH VIETNAM. JAPANESE MATERIAL FOR IOG PREFABRICATED TEMPORARY HOUSING PROJECT HAS ARRIVED IN HAIPHONG AND FIRST 12 UNITS OF SIX SUB-UNITS EACH HAVE BEEN ERECTED. LOCAL LABOR HAS BEEN TRAINED TO ERECT REMAINING UNITS. A TOTAL OF 3,952 INDIVIDUAL FAMILY UNITS ARE PLANNED FROM THE FOLLOWING SOURCES:

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JAPAN-1,700 UNITS

SWEDEN-1,800 UNITS

FINLAND-304 UNITS

WEST GERMANY-148 UNITS

GERMAN MATERIAL ALREADY IN HANOI AND PARTS FROM FINLAND AND SWEDEN ALSO ARRIVING. IOG TRYING ARRANGE SHIP SOME MATERIAL OVERLAND VIA RAIL FROM WESTERN EUROPE THROUGH USSR IN ORDER SAVE COSTS AND IS ASKING SOVIET RED CROSS TO SUPERVISE AND IF POSSIBLE

DONATE RAIL SHIPPING THROUGH USSR. ESTIMATED 380 FREIGHT CARS REQUIRED, AND PRACTICALITY OF RAIL SHIPMENT NOT YET ESTABLISHED.

7. TOTAL COST OF HOUSING AND FREIGHT ESTIMATED AT SWISS FRANCS 15 MILLION, PLUS ADDITIONAL SF 5 MILLION FOR PIPING, ELECTRICAL MATERIAL AND CRANES AS WELL AS SUPERVISORY EXPERTS. IOG DOES NOT EXPECT FINANCE ANY MORE HOUSING UNLESS SUBSTANTIAL EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED.

8. ASSISTANCE IN LAOS. NEEDS NOT CONSIDERED GREAT THERE AND WILL BE SCALED BACK FROM \$30,000 TO \$20,000 PER MONTH. IOG DELEGATES WILL BE REDUCES FROM FIVE TO THREE.

9. ASSISTANCE IN CAMBODIA. PROVIDING PRIORITY ASSISTANCE TO CAMBODIA WILL BE BUDGETARY PROBLEM EVEN WITH AVAILABLE FUNDS FREED FROM OTHER TWO COUNTRIES SINCE COST OF FIVE MEDICAL TEAMS NOW GREAT.

10. PERSONNEL. IOG HAS PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF ABOUT 60 IN FIELD, WHICH IS 10 FEWER THAT AT PEAK. EXPECTS FIELD STAFF TO BE REDUCED TO ABOUT 50 IN APRIL. DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF IOG OTT ARRIVED PHNOM PENH FEB 12 FOR CONFERENCE OF CHIEF DELEGATES IN INDOCHINA AND WILL REVIEW SITUATION.

11. ORGANIZATION OF IOG. OLAF STROH EXPECTED LEAVE POST AS DIRECTOR OF IOG AND RETURN TO FULL-TIME DIRECTION OF SWEDISH RED CROSS MARCH 31. FROM THEN ONWARD DAYTO-DAY OPERATIONAL DIRECTION WILL BE IN HANDS OF COL. GILL (UK SUBJECT) ALTHOUGH GILL WILL NOT HAVE TITLE OF DIRECTOR AND WILL TAKE GUIDANCE FROM CHIEFS OF OPERATIONS OF ICRC AND LICROSS. IN VIETNAM AND LAOS RED CROSS DELEGATES WILL NO LONGER BE IDENTIFIED AS IOG DELEGATES BUT WILL ASSUME INDIVIDUAL ROLES AS ICRC OR LICROSS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DELEGATES. RESPONSIBILITIES IN THOSE COUNTRIES WILL BE DIVIDED ALONG TRADITIONAL RED CROSS LINES, I.E., ICRC WILL COVER POW AND POLITICAL DETAINEE PROTECTION AND WELFARE AND OTHER GENEVA CONVENTIONS RESPONSIBILITIES AS WELL AS TRACING SERVICE FUNCTION WHILE LICROSS WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES AND DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF SUPPLIES. BECUASE CAMBODIA IS CONSIDERED A WAR ZONE, IOG WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE THERE AS PREVIOUSLY, WITH FULLY INTEGRATED IOG DELEGATES IN THE FIELD IDENTIFIED AS SUCH AND GILL REPORTING DIRECTLY TO ICRC ON OPERATIONS IN THAT COUNTRY.

12. GILL STRESS (HOPEFULLY) THAT IOG SYSTEM NOT BREAKING UP AND THAT IOG WILL CONTINUE OPERATING IN FIELD WITH NO DUPLICATION OR OVERLAP, SAME AS BEFORE IN SPITE OF ABOVE CHANGES. HE ASKED

THAT INFORMATION RE THESE CHANGES BE HELD CLOSELY, PRESUMABLY IN ORDER NOT TO DISCOURAGE POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTORS TO IOG.

13. GILL ENVISAGES IOG OPERATING UNTIL MID-1975 ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT INDICATE SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR OPERATIONS UNTIL THEN. MISSION BELIEVES IOG NOT RPT NOT LIKELY LAST THAT LONG. ONE OF OUR CONTACTS IN LICROSS WAS ALREADY REFERRING TO IOG TWO WEEKS AGO AS HAVING BEEN REPEAT BEEN USEFUL AND FRUITFUL EXPERIENCE FOR RED CROSS MOVEMENT, A VIEW WHICH MISSION SHARES. DALE

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## Message Attributes

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